

12 June 2005

Romans 5

May the Holy Spirit inspire my lips and open our hearts
to receive the love of Jesus Christ,

Amen.

At the corner of Danforth and Broadview the local realtor posts little truisms and quotes on the marquee above his door. Recently the sign read,

Choices are the hinges of destiny.

And choices are something that we make every day: insignificant choices and very important choices. We choose to have a Big Mac rather than a salad and eventually go up a dress size. We choose to stay up late to watch one more show on TV rather than getting a good night's sleep and hate the sound of the alarm in the morning. We choose how long to stay in school, our children's names, the neighbourhood we live in and the person that we marry. Big choices, little choices, we make them all the time.

But the most important choice we ever make is the one that truly determines our eternity: our destiny. It is the decision we make when we choose Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. In our lesson to-day we heard the words of the Apostle Paul, when he wrote to the Romans to remind them that "... we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord, Jesus Christ ..." It was almost two

thousand years ago when he wrote those words and yet they are still as true and important to the choices we make as if he wrote them to us to-day.

For many of us, the decision to be a Christian was made by our parents: they were Christians and when we were born they chose to have us baptized. They took us to church and made promises that they would help us to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus – just as their parents had probably done for them. We were still babies and didn't even know what a wonderfully momentous thing had happened: we had been claimed for Jesus.

Some of us were baptized as adults or maybe haven't yet made that decision. In the old days, when Christianity was very young, superstitious people liked to wait until they were dying to be baptized so that they wouldn't sin between baptism and death! But it is pretty hard to know when you are going to die and they took an awful risk that they wouldn't be dedicated to Christ!

Even for those of us whose parents made the decision to baptize us, when we grow up we get to make our own choices, we choose whether we will live a life in Christ. We choose whether we will get out of bed on Sunday morning and go to church. We choose whether we will learn more about the Bible and our faith. We choose whether we will love Jesus and try to follow His commandments to love both God and our neighbour.

This morning you made the choice to come to church: you resisted a lovely, lazy lie-in and came here to worship God, to learn more about our Saviour, and to obey His injunction to eat the bread and drink the wine in memory of His broken body and the blood He shed to save us. You have made the choice to love God and share paradise in His love.

Jesus said, "... whosoever believeth in me shall not perish, but have everlasting life ... ". Deep down inside of each of us there is a great longing for oneness with Christ in eternal life. And so we choose life, we choose joy, we choose love, we choose Christ: God has already chosen us, we just have to reach out and say "Yes!" – yes to the promises of my baptism and yes to the promise of Christ, yes, I am His and He is mine. I choose Jesus and with Him, the hinge of my destiny is sure and certain eternal life. Amen.